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Sustainable development: follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Joint Inspection Unit

Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: final findings

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: final findings" (A/72/119).

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Summary

The report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: final findings" (A/72/119) surveys and analyses system-wide coherence in the adoption of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

The present note reflects the views of organizations of the United Nations system on the recommendations provided in the report. The views have been consolidated on the basis of input provided by member organizations of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which welcomed the report and supported some of its conclusions.

I. Introduction

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: final findings" (A/72/119) surveys and analyses system-wide coherence in the adoption of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway). It represents a follow-up to the earlier report of the Unit entitled "Recommendations to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the determination of parameters for a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States" (JIU/REP/2015/2).

II. General comments

2. Organizations of the United Nations system welcome the report, which presents valuable findings on system-wide coherence in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

3. While the report is comprehensive, it would have benefited from more analysis of United Nations coordination on the ground (e.g., United Nations country teams, resident coordinator systems, United Nations sustainable development frameworks) to reflect the importance of having an integrated regional and streamlined United Nations approach to planning and monitoring for small island developing States in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Specific comments on recommendations

Recommendation 1

The governing bodies of the United Nations system and of the multilateral environment agreements, taking into account the findings of the comprehensive review, should give precise system-wide coordinated guidance to the organizations so as to ensure that the priorities of the SAMGA Pathway are mainstreamed in the strategic plans, within the realm of the organizations' mandates, and should encourage all stakeholders to make sufficient and predictable resources available for the effective and accelerated implementation of the Pathway.

4. While the organizations of the United Nations system generally support recommendation 1, noting that is directed to governing bodies, they also suggest that it could benefit from clarification. Specifically, the recommendation that "the governing bodies of the United Nations system ... should give precise system-wide coordinated guidance to the organizations" could be construed to mean that guidance should be given to organizations by all governing bodies, whereas organizations may only in fact receive guidance from their individual governing bodies. Furthermore, the reference to "predictable resources" could present practical impediments to implementing this recommendation for voluntarily funded organizations given that they operate on a needs basis and at the request of host Governments and are therefore not in a position to commit themselves to contributing to "sufficient and predictable resources" for the effective implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

Recommendation 2

The governing bodies of the United Nations system should ensure that the strategic plans and work programmes of the system organizations include

specific objectives related to the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, within the realm of their respective mandates, to be measured against a set of established key performance indicators to monitor and report on the achievements.

5. Organizations support recommendation 2, acknowledging that it is directed at governing bodies. It was noted that organizations align their strategic results to their capacities and strengths and therefore support can be provided within overall strategic objectives without stand-alone "specific objectives" related to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

Recommendation 3

The governing bodies of the United Nations system, in adopting the strategic plans and work programmes of the organizations, should encourage the organizations to ensure that the activities in support of sustainable development of SIDS, within the realm of the mandate of each organization, are aligned with the regional and national priorities identified by the Governments of those States, regional organizations and SIDS development partners, so as to foster the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as the blueprint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of SIDS.

6. Organizations support recommendation 3, acknowledging that it is directed at governing bodies.

Recommendation 4

The governing bodies of the United Nations system should request the organizations to coordinate the planning and implementation of their capacity-building activities in close consultation with the small island developing States and all partners for development so as to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency in providing support to achieve the goals defined in the SAMOA Pathway, while avoiding saturation of the absorptive capacity of SIDS at the country level.

7. Organizations support recommendation 4, acknowledging that it is directed at governing bodies. It was suggested that organizations may wish to be guided by their strategic alignment to target 17.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, regarding the strengthening of country capacity to implement the Goals, whereby organizations can focus on sectors in which they have a core competency that is recognized by national stakeholders and partners in the country context.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure the participation of their organizations in the process led by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development to actively contribute to addressing the specificity of SIDS as a special case with tailor-made solutions, and should also ensure that new parameters of eligibility are designed for better access to financing for development for SIDS.

8. Organizations of the United Nations system support recommendation 5; however, it was noted that proposals and discussions within the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development are bound by the commitments of Member States in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. In addition, organizations look to the Department of

Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the convener of the Task Force, to position the concerns of small island developing States in the agenda of the Task Force as and when appropriate.

Recommendation 6

The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should encourage the allocation of predictable multi-year funding to facilitate the effective implementation of programmatic activities in support of the small island developing States, based on needs assessments prepared by the United Nations system organizations in consultation with SIDS and their relevant partners.

9. Noting that recommendation 6 is directed at governing bodies, organizations of the United Nations system support the recommendation inasmuch as they agree that long-term predictable funding supports effective and efficient development. However, there are concerns regarding the concept of funding that is "based on needs assessments prepared by the United Nations system organizations in consultation with SIDS and their relevant partners" since in some cases this could conflict with an organization's own assessment mechanisms as approved by its governing body. Furthermore, it was noted that in recent years the level and duration of funding from donors has been less predictable, which has consequences for how some organizations plan their work and commit resources to support work in programme countries, including small island developing States. Therefore, some organizations, particularly those that are voluntarily funded, face practical impediments to implementing this recommendation as drafted since they are not in a position to commit to predictable multi-year funding.

Recommendation 7

The legislative and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should ensure, based on the ongoing work of the United Nations Statistical Commission and, when relevant, on the work of the inter-agency forums and expert groups created to advise Member States, that the specificity of SIDS is explicitly considered in defining the elements of monitoring and accountability frameworks to report on progress made on the Sustainable Development Goals, so that processes and indicators are adapted to their needs and priorities identified at the national and regional levels.

10. Organizations support recommendation 7, noting that it is directed at legislative and governing bodies. They note that, while the Sustainable Development Goals are aspirational global targets and all Member States are expected to adapt them according to national context, and while monitoring and accountability frameworks reporting on progress made regarding the Goals should be adapted to all contexts, including those of small island developing States, at the same time those States face specific additional challenges associated with climate change and disaster risk reduction that go beyond the global targets and indicators of the Goals. Therefore, organizations recognize the special case for development of small island developing States and support the need for tailored approaches in those States that reflect their unique context, opportunities and constraints. Support could include enhancing capacity-building in data and statistics, where appropriate, to help small island developing States to overcome data challenges that can reduce their ability to engage in monitoring processes.

Recommendation 8

The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should coordinate their efforts in designing monitoring and accountability frameworks and tools adapted to the capacity of SIDS to monitor and report on the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and other sustainable development-related global mandates, while avoiding the burden of multiple reporting frameworks.

11. Organizations support recommendation 8, noting that it is directed at governing bodies, and as for recommendation 7 they note that monitoring and accountability frameworks reporting on progress made regarding the Sustainable Development Goals should be adapted to all contexts, including those of small island developing States. However, organizations also recognize the burden that monitoring and reporting frameworks can have for those States and many United Nations system entities stand ready to support streamlining indicators specific to small island developing States and, where applicable, to support capturing development progress and gaps in those States. It was also noted that coordination across the United Nations system occurs through the United Nations sustainable development frameworks, which highlight the contribution of the United Nations system to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Samoa Pathway.

Recommendation 9

The Secretary-General should present to the General Assembly, as part of his report on follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, a summary of actions taken and planned to strengthen the coordination and complementarity of the work of DESA and OHRLLS in support of SIDS.

12. Recommendation 9 is supported by the Secretariat, which will continue to strengthen internal coordination and foster synergies for the benefit of the implementation of the Samoa Pathway. It was noted that this recommendation should be included in the relevant resolution for adoption by Member States in order to include contributions of the members of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States.